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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, help us this day to praise Your Name, ponder Your precepts, and live for Your glory. May we praise Your Name by living with gratitude because of the gifts of life, liberty, and joy. Teach us to ponder Your word as we seek Your wisdom in the privacy of our prayerful encounters with You. Lord, we desire to honor You with our lives by exemplifying those attitudes and traits that give the world a glimpse of Your divine plan.

Today, use the Members of this body for Your purposes. Draw them so close to You that their work will not be a burden but a delight. Empower them to serve our land in the spirit of children rejoicing in doing Your will.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 10, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE PRESIDING OFFICER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am happy to see the Presiding Officer who is presiding for the first time—a new Senator, longtime Member of Congress, but we are happy to see you presiding over the Senate.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday, we made significant progress on the ethics and lobbying reform bill. This will go a long way toward helping to reduce cynicism about this body. We began debate on the bill. The Republican leader and I offered a strong substitute amendment that made numerous important improvements to the underlying bill. And then I offered an amendment to strengthen the bill even further. Then we have had a number of other Senators come to the floor and make statements, offer amendments. And I think that is certainly appropriate.

Mr. President, I do emphasize this morning this is not a campaign finance reform bill. My personal feeling is campaign finance reform needs a very close going over. We need to hold extensive hearings on this issue. There are a lot of very complicated issues dealing with campaign finance reform, some of which deal with not only the Rules

Committee but the Finance Committee because there are tax implications. I respectfully submit to my colleagues—both in the majority and minority—this is not the place to do rifle shots on campaign finance reform. I was a real cynic in the past about doing anything with, for example, 527s. I now think we have to take a look at a lot of these campaign finance issues, including 527s. But it has to be done in a thoughtful, probative way. I hope we can do that.

This is not a campaign finance bill. Campaign finance is an important issue, and we are going to have a full consideration of campaign finance in this Congress. But this bill is not the place for those amendments.

I look forward to Senators continuing to offer amendments today and hope we can make more progress in the coming days to wrap up this bill next week. We will wrap up the bill next week, even if it is a long week. If things slow down or there appears to be some stalling, I will have to see if cloture is the only alternative, which it might be. But for now let's keep moving forward. I have had people come to me and say they have some amendments to offer. I think that is very important. This is an open process. People should be able to do that.

We are going to be in a period of morning business for an hour, as soon as I and the Republican leader sit down. The majority will control the first half hour and the minority will control the last half hour. Once morning business closes, the Senate will resume the consideration of the ethics bill.

As I have said, there are a number of amendments pending. And as I have indicated, there are other Members who are interested in offering amendments today. I hope we will be in a position later this morning to take action on some of these pending amendments. The managers have expressed their desire to work with Members in regard to these two amendments.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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